THE UNITARIAN ADVANCE

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF PROGRESS IN RELIGION

NOVEMBER 1917

"Speak unto this people that they go forward"

Freedom, Fellowship, Character and Service in Religion

THE UNITARIAN ADVANCE

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Notice to Subscribers

WITH this issue the UNITARIAN ADVANCE *will close its career and turn over its subscription list and its good will to* The Christian Register *which is about to be transferred from private ownership to a Board of Trustees which will hold and administer the paper for the denomination as a whole. Subscribers to the* UNITARIAN ADVANCE *who are subscribers to* The Christian Register *may receive a refund on unexpired subscriptions by making proper claim upon the treasurer, Rev. E. C. Smith, 105 South Dearborn Street, Chicago.*

For eight years the editors of the UNITARIAN ADVANCE *have given of their time and strength and also of their money to maintain an independent and radical Unitarian publication. Other friends have helped to this end in various years. We feel that the effort has been tremendously worth while. In discontinuing it at this time under pressures which are generally felt we are glad to throw our support so far as possible to the present effort to make* The Christian Register *broadly representative of the denominational life.*

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE held in Montreal was a notable gathering in more ways than one. Surely the cordial hospitality of the people of Canada was most delightful. Canadian Unitarians and American Unitarians of course belong together. Their relations in history and destiny are intimately close. In both realms the things our churches stand for are coalescing factors in the destiny of two great peoples. The time has indeed passed when men shall dream of a governmental union between the Dominion and the states. Canada has a great career before her, better to be consummated on imperial lines than any other. But the Unitarian ideal of human brotherhood, of open-minded spirit of progress, and of reciprocating sympathies in all relations of life is coincident with the ideal which makes possible the removal of defensive fortifications along our national borders and stimulates the most generous trade and industrial relations amongst our peoples. The worst things about the people on either side of the line—the things that make some Canadians vehemently say, "We're glad we are not in the States," and some Americans rather willing that Canada should not "be counted in with us"—are things to which our gospel is persistently antiseptic. The more our ideal grows the more surely the peoples of the earth will draw closer together—which is part of our missionary responsibility.

* * *

THE MOST permanently important thing that happened at Montreal was the placing in our church there of the tablet commerating "one hundred years of peace" between England and the United States. We trust the symbol of this tablet is prophetic, even more than it is historical. For we want more peace and a better sort of peace even than that which has existed between the two great Anglo-Saxon speaking peoples of the world during the last century. We want a constructive peace and not simply a defensive peace; we want an unselfish peace and not merely a peace of expediencies and self-

interests. Shall fellowship in the tragedy of a great war bring to us a deeper and more sacred realization of what we can be together for world progress than ever was realized before? The answer to the question must come in terms of religion —and of our sort of religion. And if such result should come out of the experience of the tragedy, it will not be a product of the war, and so another argument for militancy; but the product of what is best in human nature forged upon the anvil of a great catastrophe into nobler attainment of its own. War's product of itself is evil, gross, barbaric, and corrupting. Let nobody miss the realization of the fact. It is only that manhood may be forced to deeper discovery of the essential anti-war principle of triumphant civilization through the vicissitudes of war, and insist on the blessing which war can never give, but which wrestling with the evil of war may bring as nothing else can bring.

* * *

WE ARE glad that our conference at Montreal spoke decisively, firmly and impressively its full sense of loyalty to the governments of America and England in hearty support of the prosecution of the present war. The great majority stood together on this issue; and while the attitude of the minority was brave, devoted and single-minded for high ideals as those of the minority conceived it, yet theirs was not the voice that represented the will of American Unitarianism at this juncture. For the point of issue, of course, is not that one group of delegates favored war and another favored peace, or that one group favored *this war*, while another believed it wrong. The issue involved, as we understand it, is that the great majority of our people insist on a noble and unselfish interpretation of the meaning and responsibility of this war, and stand constructively behind that interpretation. There is great business at hand for the churches today, and especially for our churches. That business is to stand resolute for the *ideal aspect* of things; to stand insistent that it is unselfishness and not selfishness, the loftier meanings of freedom and democracy and not merely the expediencies of international politics that are at stake. We are with those who are waging a war for ideal ends, and not against them. But we are with them with the responsibilities of our own best ideals, which must never be obscured or compromised. The pacifists who simply scold against war and stand off unsympathetically when the mass of their countrymen are aroused will be voiceless and impotent when the day of decisions and conclusions comes. They have forfeited their influence, they have lost their place of prophetship. But the voice of patient reason and austere idealism, of universal good will and comprehensive humanity must be heard, the restraints of nobility must be at hand when ignoble passions and partisanships crowd to the board to settle matters; and the business of the churches everywhere is not to acquiesce with the clamor of the thoughtless and the mad, but stand staunch and loyal to her own ideals—not on the outside but on the inside of the company of those who have had the fighting to do and the burden to bear and the tragedy to wrestle with, and have met it all, not grudgingly but with splendid ardor of devotion.

* * *

THAT was a noble address presented at the Montreal Conference in the name of the council by its chairman, Rev. John Haynes Holmes. It was not only eloquent but it was preeminently sane. Mr. Holmes' personal views as to pacifism are not the views of the majority of us. But the spirit and message of that address at Montreal was significantly representative of Unitarianism at its best and a graphic illustration of the logical Unitarian way of seeing and doing things. Three policies of action were possible under the circumstances: First, to say nothing about the war at all, since it was a disputed issue. But at a time when the war is the most vital concern of all the earth, such an evasion would be ignorable. Second, to present a ringing statement of views held by the person presenting the address, or of the majority of the council in whose name it was presented. Such a presentation would surely be partisan and, in this case at any rate, exceedingly disagreeable and disturbing. The address presented by Mr. Holmes was a triumph of success in the third possible way of meeting the case. It frankly recognized that the war

is the uppermost concern of everyone and could not worthily be avoided. With singularly impartial spirit the different points of view were set forth at their best; and though the speaker's viewpoint was uncompromisingly avowed, it was not forced. Then came the earnest and ardent attempt to lift the whole issue to its ideal altitudes and find an interpretation that could have glory for us all. We believe that just the thing which our Unitarian gospel embodies was so signally illustrated by this striking address that it is sure to stand out as an element not to be forgotten in our processes of denominational self-finding in this crisis of religious testing. And this we say, not agreeing at all with Mr. Holmes' personal gospel of pacificism.

* * *

WE BELIEVE that Senator LaFollette is one of the most mischievous factors in American affairs at the present moment. He has a right to his own convictions, undoubtedly, no matter how much they differ from the views of his countrymen. But his method of action in urging those convictions is neither sensible, patriotic or worthy of respect. For our nation is not merely a debating club, but a fellowship for efficiency in the things of civilization. We are a democracy, but that does not mean we are a wrangling mob. As a nation we have chosen a method of efficiency; we have registered a decision of world responsibility; and our national constitution places the responsibility of making that decision effectual in the hands of the Administration. Every patriot of every political party realizes the seriousness of the crisis, and has laid partisan considerations aside to make the nation's decision arrive at honorable conclusions. Republicans, Progressives, and Socialists stand with Democrats now in helping the nation's Administration accomplish the ends which Congress has resolved upon by overwhelming vote. Senator LaFollette represents the rump factionalists in all the political parties—who want to defeat Democracy by proving that a minority and not the majority ought to rule. At every stage his action has been directed to impede the Administration, to weaken if he can the popular support of the majority voice in the nation, and, as it seems to us, in flippant and trivial way to minimize the force of its idealisms. We do not wonder that people all over the land are angrily impatient about it, and cry out for the Senator's suppression.

* * *

NEVERTHELESS, we believe that no greater folly could be consummated by the American people than would be involved in the expulsion of Senator LaFollette from the national Senate. Incidentally, we believe that, mischievous though he may be, he is not the most mischievous personality in American affairs by any means. There is another we solemnly believe, much more influential, as he is greatly the superior intellectual gifts and dramatic brilliancy, who is vastly more dangerous to America's well-being at this crisis than ever Senator LaFollette can possibly be; more dangerous because the very method of his attack on the Senator strikes at the heart of the essential meaning of American democracy; because a little earlier in the game, moreover, his voice was as noisily and factitiously hostile to the Administration and to national unity as ever was LaFollette's, and with meaner accent of selfish egotism, and who in his noisy clamor for LaFollette's expulsion is sounding one of the most perilous notes that can enter into the councils of democracy. For democracy fails when it becomes craven before the voice of the minority, and dares not take the risks of its own ideals in times of difficulty. The sort of thing that LaFollette does and says is mischievous; but the sort of pusillanimity that is afraid to let even wrong-headed men speak their convictions is more mischievous still, in the long run of things. Minorities are not always wrong; majorities are not always right; and the principle that even wrong minorities must be deprived of the rights of freedom of speech is forever inimical to human progress. Democracies must have the courage of their ideals or they are not fit to exist. Democracies must take hazards, even large hazards, sometimes, and very disagreeable hazards sometimes, rather than risk the most unworthy hazard of all, the betrayal of democracy itself. Here indeed is where the influence of thoughtful, generous-minded, discriminating men must make

itself felt. Such men must do what can be done to prevent war ardor from becoming a debauch of passionate bigotry instead of a consecration of high loyalty. The only true patriot is a true-souled patriot, loving his country well enough to keep sane when it is woefully easy to become insane in the excesses of popular passions and prejudices. LaFollette in the Senate doing his most exasperating worst is less harmful to our cause than LaFollette martyrized in the cause of free speech.

* * *

HE PRESENTED in our last issue a review of Dr. G. Stanley Hall's notable book, "Jesus Christ in the Light of Psychology." Of course ours was a frankly Unitarian and rationalistic viewpoint. We are interested to read an editorial review of this same book in *The Congregationalist*, representing the religious fellowship of which Dr. Hall is himself a member. A part of this review we publish for our readers' edification.

But the work as a whole, its treatment of the most important themes is disappointing, misleading and false. Dr. Hall's psychological Christ is not our Christ, his God is not our our God, his faith is not our faith. Like many other destructive critics he clings to the old phraseology but not with the old meanings. He says: "I believe I can now repeat almost every clause of the Apostles' Creed with a fervent sentiment of conviction. My intellectual interpretation of the meaning of it probably differs *toto caelo* from that of the average orthodox believer. To me not a clause of it is true in a crass, literal, material sense, but all of it is true in a sense far higher, which is only symbolized on the literal plane." What he means is that the Apostles' Creed is historically false.

His conception of God, for example, is essentially Comtian. "Religion," he says, "apotheosized man, purging away all individual sin and error. Than himself thus spiritualized there is no other God." Of the story of the birth of Christ he says: "It might be called the return of the not so much prodigal as ostracized God to his father, man. So there is a sense in which generic man, or humanity is truly God's father and is recognized as such by the title Son of God, which Jesus gave to himself." The story of the birth of Christ is, of course, an interesting myth. The death of Christ was an historical fact, but its significance is not that of the Creeds. Its result was "the slaughter of the old God." No definite conclusion is reached concerning the nature, or even the fact of the Resurrection of Christ.

It is difficult to give a true conception of the trend and value of the thought in these two large volumes by thus presenting quotations, here and there, from the text. But these quotations fairly reveal the unusual character of the treatise and the reason why it will be unsatisfactory to the majority of readers. In a word, the God in whom Dr. Hall believes, apparently, is a mere name. He is the creation of the human soul. Dr. Hall does not definitely deny the objective reality of God, but he conveys the impression that he believes the genesis of our conception of God to be not in God himself, but in the urge of the race-soul. Prayer is "a dialogue between the individual and the racial or unconscious self." And as to Jesus Christ, the historicity of his personality "is of no more importance than is the question for the Swiss peasant whether William Tell was a person or a solar myth." The real Christ is that adorable image of him, that developing conception which is born of the longings of the human heart—in other words, not the historical but the psychological Jesus. It is a matter of vital significance whether or not this is true. If it is, we have indeed come upon a new and altogether strange Christianity. But it is not true. Dr. Hall's book is a theological curiosity. It reminds us too keenly and painfully of the German way of studying religious themes, and the fruits of that method are clearly revealed to the world today. We do not believe that Dr. Hall's creed, as set forth in these volumes, contains the faith that will save the world.

FOUR CARDINAL PRINCIPLES.

By far the best things we shall carry with us into the future as spiritual equipment for our unaccomplished task are the Four Principles which have been growing clearer and stronger within us from the beginning, and which are now the very breath of our life as Unitarians; principles that we have done somewhat to establish in the world around us, but that are not Unitarian alone, nor Christian alone, but are the vital principles of liberal religion under whatever name. Every Unitarian should know the Four Principles by heart, like the Apostles' Creed, as answer, not to the question, "What do Unitarians believe?" but to the question, "What do Unitarians most *care for* in religion?" They are—Freedom, the method in religion, in place of Authority; Fellowship, the spirit in religion, in place of Sectarianism; Character, the test in religion, in place of Ritual or Creed, Service, or Salvation of Others, the aim in religion, in place of Salvation of Self. Doctrines will change; but these things are more than doctrines, and will abide. Whatever name or names the nobler faith of the future may bear, these will be its Four Cardinal Principles. In these things, and only in these things, lies the hope of religious unity. It will be, not the Unity of Belief, but the Unity of Spirit; and only in that sense is religious unity desirable. On these Four Principles, as on corner stones, slowly shall rise, with many separate chapels clustered beneath its towers, the Church of Humanity. WILLIAM CHANNING GANNETT.

Romain Rolland: A Messenger for the Times

By Rev. Newton Ben Knapp
Unity Church, Hinsdale

THE French people have, since the war broke out, drawn close to the heart of mankind. At every step in this shocking crisis they have won the admiration, confidence and affection of the world. To many this revelation of unseen power came as a complete surprise, but to those few who really knew France it was long foreseen. Professor Gidding, of Columbia, has for many years expressed his enthusiasm for the genuine intellectual interest he found in all classes, even in the peasants of France, for the rare French quality that marks their products as classy and distinctive, and for their undying idealism which places the spirit above the flesh. This great American sociologist has declared that the French have led all others for the past one hundred years in being the most soundly cultivated people on the globe.

One of the finest, and a conspicuous exemplar of the new France at this moment, is Romain Rolland. He is one of the most hated and one of the most loved factors in the midst of the world conflict. Daring to be independent, he has brought down upon his shoulders a swarm of critics. They have visited upon him unrelenting abuse, and unrestrained malicious slander.

He has even been branded by the press a coward, a pro-German, and a traitor. His articles have been dissected, and only the misleading lines given to the public. He has been condemned even in France without a hearing. Once again the old saying proves true, "Give me two lines of writing of anyone, and I will have the author hanged."

Who is this man Romain Rolland? What has he said? What is he doing to prove such an alarming danger to the liberties of society?

Edmund Gosse, the English critic, has pronounced one of his books "the noblest work of fiction of the twentieth century." Another has spoken of him as the real spiritual leader of France, while the Dutch poet and philosopher, Frederick Von Eeden writes, "France has had great poets and great novelists, but her greatest glory is in men of unswerving character, of free and proud spirit, the men of purely human quality which surpasses in value to all humanity the artistic and literary gifts. Such a man was Victor Hugo, and after him I know of no one who so closely resembles him as Romain Rolland."

His chief interest to us, however, lies in his writings, his thought and his spirit. He has from the outset of his career been a hero worshiper; his first books are therefore unsurpassable biographies of such stalwart souls as Tolstoi, Michael Angelo, and Beethoven. A few months ago there came from the press the book for which he has suffered the height of criticism and anguish, "Above the Battle," a book that will always be regarded as one of the strongest contributions of a master hand and a master spirit, to supernatural love. But Romain Rolland's supreme triumph thus far rests in his novel "Jean Christophe."

This novel has already been translated into six languages. In spite of its length of ten volumes, it is being read and reread by thousands. Throughout Europe it is said to be the most widely read and most eagerly discussed novel of our time. It was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1915.

The novel has two extraordinary themes that at this moment engage universal attention. We have here first of all the unfolding of an eternal spirit; a soul of commanding potentiality—so that it becomes on the personal side a "great prose epic of passion, buffed by the waves of circumstances, and moving across the stage which presents in one vast panorama the culture of modern Europe." "It is a man that I am creating," the author explains with thorough justification, "my hero absorbs me. . . . I seem to be incarnated in him."

We have in the second place a noble effort to reconcile the spirit of France and Germany. Before the war broke out it was said this novel had done more to bring about an understanding by each other of these two nations than all the banquets, parties and plans of the diplomats.

Jean Christophe is the personification of an idealized Germany. Olivier is the representation of the steady, highly intellectual spirit of France, and they are necessary compliments to each other. Their love and devotion is sure to become a classic expression of glorified friendship.

About these two central themes Romain Rolland has woven his richest and profoundest observations. He is a race psychologist—one would say he had lived in both of these countries all his life. He is a musical critic, not only himself a skillful performer, but these pages prove him to be one of the most interesting living critics of the day. He is incurably religious; always does he see a mystic meaning in experience; no matter how sad, it is lighted up with a soft radiance from within. His pen is dipped in the light of the stars.

Romain Rolland's first claim to our attention is in his sincerity. With the two American poets, Emerson and Whitman, he proclaims no virtue is as becoming as that of being frankly oneself. The sine qua non of individual happiness and power is the determination at the outset to be freely the voice of one's own soul. Then, somehow, no matter how crude it may be, the universe recognizes its harmony and reinforces its sentiment.

Never was there a novel written that is a more complete expression of the author's soul. He does not pretend to be giving the world a mere work of art, it is a burning criticism of life, a flaming ideal for the young men of tomorrow. "I was lonely," he writes. "Like so many in France, I felt myself in a hostile moral world in which it was impossible to breathe. I was stifled. I wanted to protest against this corrupt thought of the so-called elect. I wanted to say to the elect, 'You lie, you don't represent France.' In order to do this, I needed a hero pure of heart and eye, whose wellnigh incorruptible soul should give him the right to speak with a voice which would make itself heard."

. . .

Almost alone of all the intellectuals of Europe, he has stood steadfast against the sweeping tides of loosened passion. He has risked everything dear to him because he felt that while others saw it as their duty to defend the national frontiers, it was just as clearly his duty to defend his nation's soul.

Nietzsche summed up a great deal of his ripest thought in the terse injunction, "live dangerously," and we love a command like that.

Samuel Butler's Ernest is without admiration since he wins not because of inherent vitality but on money. To him the flesh is stronger than the spirit. Jean Christophe, with pale face but flashing eye, exclaims, "What is life? A tragedy. Hurrah." Through troubles that rent his body he went with abounding joy. Without a sou with which to buy the next meal his face was radiant. There were times in his sleep when he burst out laughing!

There are times when to proclaim love is to invite persecution. The one who entreats "love your enemies," is regarded as a public danger while the writer of "Hymns of Hate" is embellished with honors. Men of the type of Jesus do not make the most desirable citizens.

It would be at the same time a mistake to say Romain Rolland does not believe in hate; he is as a matter of fact a good hater. To him hate is a power and should at times be used with the whole heart. At this moment the one to be hated is he who remains safely behind the lines stirring up hatred against the enemy while he does nothing to endanger his own skin, or to allay the conflict. Rolland's crowning distinction in this vital matter lies in the conviction that there is such a thing as using intelligence even in hate. Justice and hatred are not mutually exclusive. It may be just to hate an individual, it is stupid to blindly hate a whole people.

Romain Rolland is of the opinion that war is the product of governments, not of peoples. In his fine letters, "Above the Battles," he makes the same distinction that President Wilson so staunchly insisted upon in his declaration to Congress on the eve of war; our quarrel is not with the people, but with the nefarious Imperial Dynasty. Clothed in the highest idealism, the young men go forth to battle expressing the heroism of the world. They come equally pure from all countries, heroic, earnest, religious, opening a

new era in the world, eager to sacrifice their noble young lives to the eternal dreams of their fathers. Beautiful is his apostrophe to these eager armies. "O young men that shed your blood with so generous a joy for the starving earth! O heroism of the world! What a harvest for destruction to reap under the splendid summer sun. Young men of all nations, brought into conflict by a common ideal, making enemies of those who should be brothers; all of you marching to your death are dear to me." . . . Above the battle, looking down upon these fighting hosts, this sympathetic spirit is firmly convinced that the men in the trenches do not fight with hatred. They are too close to reality not to know the ones they kill are their brothers. This he has always found in his friends at the front, so that to read the rasping cries of hatred, the shameless villifications and misrepresentations of the enemy is "a horror and a pity."

"I will not be a party to hatred," he declares, "I will be just to all my enemies. In the midst of passion I wish to preserve the charity of my vision."

Here then is the reason why the press and "intellectuals" of Europe rose up in one accord against him. They desired to fight "hate for hate," and "an eye for an eye." Romain Rolland wanted his loved country even while fighting to remain true to her highest ideals and her greatest traditions. He stood alone and said courageously what thousands of others should have said. Let Germany outrage the world, France must even in a sea of blood keep her garments white!

Let no one infer from what I have said, if they are not acquainted with Rolland's general position, that he has given sympathy to the enemy or that he is working for peace.

I have nowhere read as scathing and penetrating invectives of Germany as from his pen, and so far as being for peace is concerned, he declares the beast is loose and nothing can now stop the carnage until it has run its course.

Let us in the summer months before us, as our young men go forth to join the colors of nations, imbibe more of the spirit of Romain Rolland. Let us cling to reason and love, justice and good sense, and may we bear in mind, with him, that we are not fighting against the enemy as much as for the sake of the enemy. Then the lofty words of our beloved Lincoln become a living resolve: "With malice toward none; with charity to all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up this nation's wounds; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

BORN UNITARIANS.

There are two kinds of born Unitarians. One kind consists of those who were born in Unitarian families; whose parents were members of Unitarian congregations; whose religious training has been wholly under Unitarian belief and custom. So many of these grow up to be worthy men and women and face both life and death so serenely as to make those who do not appear as the exceptions which are almost anomalies. Many such born Unitarians become adherents and supporters of the church in their generation, and these again are so worthy of their traditions and obligations that they make the careless and unappreciative ones appear by contrast in a bad light, as they deserve.

The other kind of born Unitarians is made up of those who seem to have been always of this way of thinking, though perhaps they did not for years even hear of the Unitarian name; who seem to have been born this way. When they came to hear about the Unitarian name and about that way of looking at things they felt no shock, and knew at once that it was theirs and had been theirs. It seemed entirely natural to them. They merely cleared away some overgrowth of a kind of belief which had prevailed about them, and found underneath their own natural faith, which was now commended to them by those who were called Unitarians; and such they were glad to be. So when they found a church of their native faith they became its members with eagerness and constancy. These have come into their inheritance only a little delayed. Those who teach and preach are helpers of such into what is their birthright.—[*Christian Life.*

The Transformation of Sorrow Into Joy

By Rev. William Safford Jones
Channing Memorial Church, Newport, R. I.

SORROW is an unescapable fact of human life. Sooner or later it enters into every household and touches every individual. The most careless and indifferent soul cannot forever ignore it. We may banish it from our thoughts, we may forget its presence in our hearts, but it will not let us go forever. It is a shallow and weak philosophy of life which dismisses it from its scheme of things. It is a very feeble and petty religious faith which tries to forget that such a thing as sorrow exists. To wish that the universe did not contain it is rather a childish feeling. To rebel at it, to chafe under it, to hate its shadow—that does not help us in the least in our efforts to live bravely and serenely. And to pretend that it is day and that the sun is still shining when the darkness of night is closing in on us is arrant folly. The primary requisite of happiness in this life is a resolute facing of things as they are, and sorrow cannot be imperiously waved aside. So majestic and so divine a certainty cannot be lightly and trivially dealt with. That which is in the warp and woof of human experience cannot be dismissed with a jest or be blandly overlooked. It is no negligible factor in life's problems. When you are considering whether human life has an infinite and eternal worth, you cannot ignore the impressive fact that from birth to death the shadow of this dread presence in one shape or another falls across our path. Who would dare deny this? Who could say that he had lived his life without a touch of sorrow, that not the faintest breath of it had chilled his hope and faith? Most of us, if not all, would admit that sorrow had colored our inmost lives and changed the current of our purposes and deepened the very springs of our being. If we cannot explain to our own satisfaction the eternal necessity for this, we can none the less accept it as a part of the Divine Order, a law of God that is from everlasting to everlasting.

When sorrow looms up in their pathway, many persons try to escape from it, some down one avenue, some down another. They cannot bear to face it. They dread the heavy burden which it will impose. In their desperation they are ready to take the first path away from it, no matter where it leads. Some fortunately happen on a road that does not go through dangerous passes and does not end in any very perilous surroundings; but the effect on character is decidedly enervating and it causes almost total destruction of will-power. To lose the capacity to choose quickly and rightly in questions of moral judgment is in itself a serious evil. Even if this is not a way of positive badness, there cannot be any strengthening and hallowing influences in it. A cowardly flight from present duty cannot issue in moral peace. A retreat before the battle is on is the basest kind of desertion. And yet many, rather than go through the conflict with sorrow to the bitter end, weakly run away from it. A sad betrayal of duty! Others, to be sure, go much further in their anxiety and fear, and apparently care not what happens to them so long as they are not reminded of their grief. The reckless course pursued by that brilliant but erratic genius Poe after the death of his idolized wife has always been followed by many. Stimulants and drugs have had many devotees, whose only object was to forget their sorrow. They plunge into the mire because they fancy that it offers a surcease from spiritual pain and agony. They go downward, not necessarily because they love the descent, but because by so doing they can avoid the shadow feared by man, which waits on the onward and upward slope. Innumerable are the ways hastily chosen and violently followed by men and women intent upon one thing only, to get rid of the cares and troubles which sorrow inevitably brings in its train. So long as the blotting out of the memory of their grief is the main thing to them, you cannot expect them to heed you when you point out their folly.

Others, again, who do not flinch from sorrow and who let its weight come down upon their shoulders and into their hearts, may meet it and endure

it in stoical resignation, never whimpering, never murmuring. They realize that they are face to face with an inexorable fact, they might say fate, and that the only thing to do is to get through it somehow, with the least possible expenditure of nervous energy and moral force. How often we come across men and women who are not afraid to undergo sorrow but who cannot see any good in it, and therefore cannot use it as a means of spiritual discipline! They are hard and bitter under their grief. They will not waver before it, but they look upon it as man's worst enemy, an unconquerable enemy. They brace themselves for the conflict, but they have no hope that anything beneficial to them will come out of it. Sorrow is something to be endured in silent anguish. In its scorching fire how can there be any healing properties? What is there to do except to bear it patiently and grimly until the future takes away the sting of its pain and dulls its memory? So argue and so question those who pass through life's sorrowful experiences untouched by their hidden grace and unmoved by the spiritual power resident within them.

On the other hand are the souls who have learned that the fine art of living is to live with your sorrows, not to brood gloomily over them but to extract their secret strength and interpret their hidden meaning, and yet not to carry them as heavy and hateful burdens. Until we have learned this lesson we have not learned how to live in a world where sorrow cannot be pushed lightly aside and ought not to be merely endured in a stoical spirit. Sorrow is turned into joy whenever any stricken soul determines to make this essentially sacred and divine experience a help to his own higher life and a means of strength to his brother men. When you decide that because you are afflicted so grievously you will try all the more earnestly to make this world a brighter and happier place to live in for all whose lives you touch, the transformation of your sorrow is made—the moral miracle has taken place. The Crusader of old carried his cross openly and proudly, on his breast, where all men could see it. He who today is nearest to the spirit of the Master hides his cross in his inmost soul, and because of his secret grief or trouble is all the more tender and considerate and patient in his relations with his fellows. He lets his great sorrow enrich and exalt his whole nature; and because of it, not in spite of it, brings sunshine into many lives. When we track sorrow to its ultimate meaning do we not find that it comes into our lives to break up our selfishness and to fill us full of good-will and sympathy? Is not that the spiritual purpose of our sorrow, to become in God's own time and way a minister to the world's joy? It may be paradoxical, but it is true, that the pain of one contributes to the happiness of all when trouble is nobly and courageously and unselfishly borne.

I have spoken of the deplorable way in which Poe tried to bury his grief. Let us contrast with it the lofty way in which Renan bore the loss of his sister Henriette, who was his constant companion and fellow-worker when he was writing his "Life of Jesus." Darmesteter in his "Life of Ernest Renan" gives us a beautiful picture of the life lived together under the clear Syrian skies by this brother and sister who loved each other so deeply. And in the dedication of his "Life of Jesus" Renan has shown us how deep and high a brother's undying love can be, how a holy sorrow can be transformed into an exalted and imperishable joy, lifting the tone and temper of all who come under the spell of these magic words wherein he has poured out his very soul. In all literature I know of no more touching dedication. The words come straight from the heart. He speaks of "those truths which conquer death, deprive it of fear, and make it almost beloved." Here is a spiritual joy akin to St. Paul's when he cried, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" Here is a flood-tide of peace which ought to flow into every troubled heart and every burdened mind, to quench every doubt and relieve every apprehension. Here is a glimpse of the divine secret at the core of sorrow.

The bearers of glad tidings of great joy in this world have one and all been men and women with heavy sorrows. Those who have brought to the weary, suffering world messages of courage and cheer have had their Gethsemane struggles with the Divine Will and have gone forth like their Master

carrying their crosses. It is those acquainted with grief who in every generation make the world better and happier. It is not the light-hearted and frivolous, but those who have gone through deep waters, to whom we really look for gifts of peace. Run over the list of your friends, and see if it is not the men and women who are trudging along under the heaviest burdens that help you most when you are in trouble. Perplexities and difficulties are more calmly and confidently faced when you have the privilege of their wise counsel. They take their sorrows seriously; but they manage to find sweetness and light where others find only bitterness and darkness. The contagion of cheerfulness, strange to say, is more apt to come from those who have the most to worry about than from those who have little or nothing to disturb them. It is not the selfish sensualist, but the Man of Sorrows, who cries, "Be of good cheer." He it is who brings light and joy into sad and heavy-laden lives.

And if you ask how sorrow can be turned into joy, I will point to a few sovereign remedies that will inevitably bring about the transformation.

1. *Work.* In the darkest hours the claims of duty must not be slighted. The deepest grief must not permit any moral slackness. Where there is any such long-continued relaxation the effect upon the character is disastrous. It becomes weak and flabby. Only by toiling persistently at the task in hand can we overcome the inclination to sink down in gloom and despair. Uninterrupted work has saved many a soul from bitterness and doubt. When the hands are idle there is a great temptation for the heart to give way to hopelessness. The discipline of duty has a remedial power even in the most stricken life. If it were not for the work that clamors to be done, we should weakly lie down under our troubles and let them crush us. Industry begets cheerfulness.

2. *Contentment.* Very often we are unable to bear our troubles patiently and to turn them into means of spiritual training because of our ingrained discontent with our lot in life. We fancy that if the circumstances of our life had been different, if we had had this gift or that talent, we should have been better able to bear up under our load. We ignore the fact that, while outward conditions might make it easier for us to go through some difficulties, only inner contentment can tide us through all difficulties. By that I have in mind not a mean-spirited lack of ambition, but a strong conviction that we are in this special place at this hard juncture for a purpose and that we must be satisfied to fulfill that purpose, at whatever cost.

3. *Giving.* In order to bring joy out of sorrow we must be givers of ourselves, our time, our money, our energy, our faith and hope. The soul that is miserly about anything goes down in the day of trouble. The generous soul is prepared against the evil day. When we flee into ourselves in selfish isolation, sorrow beats down our defenses. When we go out from ourselves on errands of mercy and helpfulness, sorrow cannot strike us down so easily. In the flinging of ourselves sympathetically into the cares and trials of others our own griefs and wrongs, while not forgotten, are borne with a deeper patience and a stronger trust. The abiding joy in our work no trouble can wrench from us.

4. *Prayer.* Work, contentment, giving, all help to transform sorrow into joy; but without prayer we do not gain the greatest strength or find the deepest peace. We may toil with all our might, we may be satisfied with our lot, we may be generous and sympathetic; but what we most need is a fundamental spiritual attitude of hope and trust. We must make the venture of faith and throw ourselves on the side of the powers of good. We are not to be importunate beggars, asking the Almighty to relieve us from the cruel weight of these burdens; we are to enter through the gateway of human service into our Father's house and tell him that we stand ready to do His bidding. He knew that before he told Him, but the telling helps us. In His comforting presence our fears and doubts vanish, and we know that all things, however troublesome and grievous, work together for good to them that love God. Face toward the light, reach for His hand in the darkness, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Where Prayer Begins

By Rev. Joseph A. Kyle
Minister of the First Unitarian Church, Davenport, Ia.

DO YOU pray? Most people do—when they want something. I do not. Let me tell you why.

Maybe you are not interested. That is what I used to think—and one day I came smack against it. I was visiting in an Eastern city where I have many friends. I used to be a minister in that city. One afternoon the telephone bell rang. A well-known physician asked to speak to me. With difficulty I recognized his voice, he was so shaken with emotion. He told me that his four-year-old boy—a blue-eyed, yellow-headed little fellow that I had often played with—had been quarantined for infantile paralysis. He said he and the other doctors knew that they were absolutely helpless. He had one hope left—that God would help him. He asked me to pray for his child.

What would you have done?

It is a very sobering thing to see a man who has trusted all his life in science throw it to the winds and beg you to pray for him when the crucial test of life comes. The boy is now on the road to recovery. The father may believe that prayer saved him—I do not. To me it is sacrilegious to pray for health. Yet for the mental comfort of a friend I could put aside my convictions and pray as I have not prayed since childhood—a prayer for physical well-being.

What would you have done? Or better still, under more normal circumstances, what would you do if a man said he had more faith in prayer than in medical science? If someone said prayer was of doubtful value? Or if someone else maintained that it came from superstition and ignorance? What would you do? If you chose the easy way you would agree with each in turn, for each could overwhelm you with proofs if you contradicted his assertion.

So much depends upon a man's mental and spiritual horizon. We all argue with a bias, but what is to prevent our making that bias as broad and noble and generous as possible? It goes without saying that out starting point, or our bias, must not be that of the ardent evangelical or of the fervent mental healer. What then? We will start from the point of view of a spiritual minded rationalist. We will reason together, for we believe, as some one has put it, that "thinking is the divine right of brains." But at the same time we will not ride roughshod over the great affirmations of the heart. Our starting point is that of the spiritual minded rationalist.

In the first place we are not dealing with only one kind of prayer. There are three kinds—the prayer of communion, the prayer of exuberant life, and the prayer of petition.

Most of us can pray the prayer of communion. Judged by the head it is the least offensive; the most commendable if we consult our hearts. It is known for its little asking. It seeks oneness with the larger life. It often takes the form of a noble resignation. It is the prayer breathed by the great spirits of the ages. It characterized the life of Jesus:

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

We find it the voice of Whittier:

"What Thou wilt, O Father, give!
All is gain that I receive:
Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful so the work be thine.
Let me find the humblest place
In the shadow of thy grace:
Let me find in thine employ,
Peace that dearer is than joy."

Or in the words of Marcus Aurelius:

"Everything harmonizes with me which is harmonious to thee, O Universe. Nothing for me is too early or too late which is in due time for thee. Everything is fruit to me which thy seasons bring, O Nature; from thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee all things return."

This is the prayer that can well be prayed by all of us. There is no one—as far as I can see—that is too rational. It lends itself well to personal usage—the silent prayer. It means an opening inward of the great flood gates that

the sane, health-giving strength, back of all life, may work freely through us. It is ennobling. It is refreshing. Within it is the secret of all that men have found good in prayer.

The prayer of exuberant life—it is one of joy, and, if we use the old terms, one of thanksgiving. Sometimes it is wholly commendable, too often it is not. To be genuine it must be absolutely spontaneous. It is poetry. It lends itself at times to public use. But there it is often spoiled.

I remember well the answer made by Dr. Starbuck when a student at Iowa City criticized him for praying. In a lecture Dr. Starbuck had found fault with the conventional prayer as a sort of pious begging. A little later he was invited to preach in one of the pulpits of the city. And he prayed like any other minister—so the student thought. At the conclusion of the service he confronted Dr. Starbuck and asked him if he thought it honest to condemn prayer in the classroom and then, on the first opportunity, to pray in the pulpit. Dr. Starbuck answered that he had observed that the birds on a bright spring morning sat on the branches of the trees and sang and sang. They were voicing their praise of life and the fullness thereof. That is what he had attempted to do in his prayer. The student had not caught the distinction between the different kinds of prayer. To sing as a bird sings, glorying in life, is one thing, to beg is another.

I have had something good to say about the first two kinds of prayer. Now we come to the prayer for which I have nothing but condemnation. It is the most common prayer. God give me my daily bread; God make me rich; God give me physical health; God make me a saint. It is, as some one has remarked, "asking God to be God." Would it not be more religious—if one does believe in God—to assume that He can get along very well without hints, promptings, and moral suasion from us? Of course, if we pictured God as a devil then our churches could not be better engaged than in laboring for his conversion.

I object to the petition for four reasons. The first objection is probably the most serious. If God agreed to answer our prayers this world would become for human beings as undesirable as it would be impossible. As it is now it may have defects, but we can live in it. This is because it is a mighty network of cause and effect. This is vividly brought to mind by the statement, often heard, that the education of a child begins with its great-grandmother. In other words, cause has long been at work. What we are, and all that we see about us, is the product of an eternity of cause. This sounds almost fatalistic.

But natural law is our best friend. It is something we can trust absolutely. It is the solid basis to work from. We human beings supply a certain free element. By study of the causes, or influences, at work about us we learn to control them to some extent. We seek to eliminate those that are harmful and to concentrate on some object, others that are good. Thus only do we accomplish anything. The stability of the universe is the keynote to the situation. From having one fixed point we can move at least a part of the world. It would be a calamity for us if a capricious force were introduced into this scheme of things—and I mean by capricious a power that could and would produce results without causes. And that is exactly what prayer asks—for result without cause.

Suppose prayer could set aside natural law. It would be a sorry world. There would be no assurance of anything, The prayer of some pious soul in far-away India might upset all the pains-taking labor of generations in America. I rest on this. Since there is not a God who sees fit, of his own accord, to make this world perfect in every respect but leaves the burden at least partly on our shoulders, then the next best thing is to have a world of law and order. It is a blessing to know that a certain cause will always and everywhere produce one and the same result. It makes constructive work possible.

An illustration will make this clear. If engineers find a stream eating away at the side of a soft bank of earth on which is some building they desire to save, they follow a very definite plan of procedure. They do not pray God to alter the course of the stream. They

know that there is some definite cause that makes the stream cut into that particular bank. To simplify matters let us suppose it is due to two things—the softness of the soil and the presence on the other bank of a great bowlder that deflects the current. It would be a simple feat to remove the bowlder on the one side and to riprap the bank on the other. Since this is a universe of cause and effect, the result would be just what the engineers expected. But suppose it were not. Suppose the course of the stream and the action of every wavelet on its surface depended not upon definite causes but upon the will of God and could be controlled by us only as we could control the will of God. The engineers would have to be dismissed. The community would have to repair to the churches to pray for what men otherwise could have accomplished. There might be some difference of opinion in the community. The owners of the property might pray for the change. Certain lovers of natural beauty might pray for the stream to be let alone, or even for the destruction of the building that started the trouble. And the outcome would depend on who could pray the loudest and the most fervently. How utterly impossible and undesirable it would be to substitute prayer for this simple reliable cause and effect.

May I give still another illustration? It is said on good authority that Joshua once was successful in prolonging the length of the day that he might finish his slaughter of the Amorites:

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord. . . . Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies; . . . the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

Just suppose this were a universe such as is there described—one that obeys prayer. If men are to ask whatsoever they desire and are to expect it to be given them, why should not the leader of an army desire to stay the approach of darkness until his victory is won? Men are confident that God gives the victory; why not the favorable conditions that lead to victory? The Germans are praying for victory. They believe sincerely that they deserve it at the hands of God. So it is with the English and the French and the Russians. Would it not be just as sane for Von Hindenburg to utter Joshua's prayer that the sun stand still until the Russians were whipped? If this were a world of prayer, what assurance would any of us have that we might plan work for tomorrow? The sun might not appear with us for days and weeks. Joshua had only a small undertaking on his hands. He could finish it in an extra day. What of the great battles lasting for months? If this were a world of prayer the sun might now have been hanging for months over the fortress of Verdun. Unless we in Iowa could pray louder than any man in Europe, our crops might have been left to fade in uninterrupted night until that fortess fell or the allies drove the Germans back to Berlin. Wouldn't it be a nice world to live in!

I have reduced this to the absurd, but not with a desire to jest. I want you to realize, if you have not before, that it would be wholly undesirable to live in a world where God answered prayers of petition. Law and order is much better, since here we have some assurance that the sun will rise tomorrow and that our work will result in what we set out to accomplish and not in something unheard of.

My second objection to this prayer is that we do not know what is best for us. It is best to let things take their wholesome, natural course. This is not a criticism of human effort, but of prayer. Where we try to improve things by controlling conditions our work is so slow and so self-correcting that little harm can enter in. Prayer is like dynamite. It is not content to work slowly and moderately. It would tear up everything. In their prayers men make wholesale demands upon God. If he answered, it would be calamitous. We live in such a complication of social surroundings that few of us know what would be best if we had the opportunity of asking. As the poet puts it:

"We ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often for our harms."

Again, as I see it, the prayer of peti-

tion, if answered, would undermine character. That is because regular work is the best thing for us. We are held to it by necessity. Prayer would be a soft way of making a living. Prayer would be in the same class with indiscriminate charity. It would undermine character. Man must work—that is the first law of character building. It is only through toil, through suffering, through dreaming, through striving that man becomes different from the brutes that subsist on what nature gives them.

The fourth and last objection to the prayer of petition scarcely needs stating. It would be impossible for God to answer our conflicting petitions.

"God help me and my wife,
My son John and his wife,
Us four and no more."

Emerson tells of a complaint made by a minister living in one of the suburbs of Boston. He was attending the Boston Thursday lecture and heard a minister pray for rain. He immediately entered a protest in these words:

"You Boston ministers, as soon as a tulip wilts under your windows, go to church and pray for rain until all Concord and Sudbury are under water."

The natural laws are fairly beneficent, at least so much so that our limited vision could not improve them. I cannot petition God for anything without interfering with or destroying something else that I finally discover to be far better left without such interference on my part.

Such are my conclusions. I hope they do not seem entirely negative. Some restrictions have been placed on prayer but I hope for the good of prayer itself. Personally, I find nothing more depressing than a materialistic prayer. I would rather associate with an out and out atheist than with a man who prays for his daily bread—of course I mean a man who prays for his bread and actually expects to get it by that means.

Whether my conclusions are negative or not depends upon oneself—his spiritual and moral horizon. With our race the prayer of petition is the oldest. It began with the instinct for self-preservation. With children instincts are supreme. As we become mature, reflecting individuals, our instincts are moulded to serve a higher moral and spiritual life; prayer no longer begins in instinct. It springs rather from our philosophy of life. We all have some kind of philosophy by which we live. The highest philosophy we can hold is that of a divine presence in all things. This we may praise in our nobler moments; this we may well at all times seek to come more and more in harmony with. The worthy prayer strives for these ends. There is of course another form of prayer—that of clamorous petition. It asks "God to be God." It has its beginning in a philosophy that is low, spiritually and morally. We can well rest with this thought—that it is not less but more spiritual to believe that such asking is unnecessary.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

By Rev. George R. Gebauer, the First Unitarian Church, Duluth.

Whatever Jesus may have thought of his own mission and message, he realized that truth is subject to the law of development. Every truth comes into the soul dimly understood, at any rate not fully revealed. It is like unto a seed, which gradually unfolds and in unfolding changes its form and yet retains its character.

There is hardly a greater difference imaginable than there is between the acorn and the oak, and yet acorn and oak are one; the oak after all is but the developed acorn, and the acorn the undeveloped oak. Indeed we may say that acorn and oak share in an inward principle, common to both, the principle of "oakiness," if I may coin this "barbarism."

Now, in the same way, every mental and spiritual truth by its very nature as a living thing is subject to development and fulfills itself through change of form. Thus the entire history of Christian theology is the account of a mental and spiritual evolution, which in its wranglings, and protests, and persecutions appears as a revolution. And if we could look into the development of the seed into the tree, I think we might see a similar process of struggle.

Wherever there is differentiation, there must be struggle, and growth

means largely differentiation. And out of this struggle and differentiation have arisen the variety of names and sects with their common shibboleth of salvation. In all alike is the same central seed-truth, the same ethical ideal variously interpreted.

By this it becomes quite obvious that we necessarily must differ in our religious thought from the early Christians. Primitive theology in the twentieth century is simply an anachronism. We should indeed no more desire to adopt the theology of the first century, than its astronomy or science, or to live after the fashion of those days. We must interpret religion in our own terms of thought, in harmony with the knowledge of our day. And even if we gladly admit that the teaching of Jesus contains the eternal truth, this does not change matters. If Jesus himself were to return to earth today and preach anew his gospel of salvation, he would give the eternal truth of love and life new forms. He would exchange the terms of the first century for those of the twentieth. His world conception would not rest upon the ancient Ptolemaic theory, but upon the conceptions of Copernicius and Kepler—and Newton, and Kant, and Herschel. He would interpret the life of the soul in terms of modern psychology. He would probably modify some of his social and economic conceptions. He would hardly advocate, as he did, indiscriminate giving, which, whatever it may have been to Palestine, would be a curse today. I, too, think that he would change his views of Satan and his host. And if he were to heal disease, he would accomplish his ends not so much by driving out devils, as by eliminating unwholesome thought and disease germs.

I, too, believe that he would hardly picture today heaven and hell in the way he did in that horrible parable of Dives and Lazarus. I, too, hold that he might change his mind in regard to the authorship of the Pentateuch and not ascribe the entire Mosaic law to Moses. In short, the Christ of the twentieth century would deny much that the Jesus of the first believed.

But, after all, these changes of form in belief would not affect at all the essential truth of his teaching. It would be the same as to spirit and substance. There still is a heaven, though it is not that of Ptolemy, and there is a soul in man, and love and active charity are as powerful as ever to overcome evil, and he still might destroy the works of the devil, even though there be no Satan, the prince of devils. And before man he would hold up the same great goal of salvation through faith and love. Theology has changed mightily, and so has man's thought about man, but religion has remained the same.

If once we get hold of this principle of evolution, the whole course of Christianity becomes to us reasonable in spite of much that seems unreasonable. We now understand the bitterness of religious controversy in the early centuries, when the very existence of the Church depended upon definite dogma. And we, too, see why Christianity, as it has found itself in its real inwardness and has learned to see in dogma but the temporary vessel of truth and not truth itself, has become more tolerant of other forms of belief. And we finally see that liberal religion is but the logical development of a deeper understanding of religion itself.

A HYMN OF LOYALTY.

Dedicated to President Wilson.

(Tune: "Waltham," No. 387.)

Land of the free! Thy sons shall bear
  Steadfast allegiance unto thee!
Home of the brave! Thy daughters fair,
  Loyal, serene and true shall be.

Not for the selfish lure of gold
  Come we to lift the warrior spear;
Not as the conqueror came of old;
  Not as the coward, dumb with fear.

We come to make democracy
  Safe for all nations everywhere;
We come to set the peoples free,
  Earth's nobler future to prepare!

We come to claim a brotherhood
  Broader than language, blood or sea;
We stand but where our fathers stood
  And battle still for liberty!

God grant at last a world at peace,
  A world of nations ruled by laws;
Warriors are we that wars may cease,
  Free men in holy Freedom's cause!

Loyal are we to our own land,
  Loyal to all humanity—
The World Republic yet shall stand!
  The Brotherhood of Man must be!

—Albert W. Palmer.

The Quarter-Hour Communion

(Un quart d'heure pour Dieu)

Conducted by DR. FRANK CARLETON DOAN, author of *Religion and the Modern Mind.*

(Readers of this Department are asked to spend a quarter-hour each day communing with God or the Highest they can find. For further information and membership blanks address the Editor of the Department, Summit, New Jersey).

Votes for God!

I.

When the spiritual history of the present age is written, it will be recorded that all the leading thinkers of our generation were working out a new and somewhat startling idea of God—the idea of a God who is limited in power and understanding. It is becoming more and more apparent to thoughtful men that the God whom most of us were brought up to believe in doesn't exist. If he did, so the practical argument runs, he would by now have created a very different world from the one we are living in. It has come about that responsible thinkers, men like John Burroughs, Henri Bergson, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, and most recently our own Reeman, have altogether discarded this traditional idea of God, and are telling us about a God who is in every way finite and human like ourselves.

It is quite true that God has not created a perfect world. And the reason for this failure, they say, is not that he isn't ready to do so, but that he can't. He isn't powerful enough nor wise enough for this supreme task of world-building. You and I will have to help him, that's all. If we don't he will go on failing forever.

II.

Now, to many people this new movement is nothing more nor less than a "subtle atheism"—to use a phrase commonly attributed to Dr. Dole. To them it is the complete bankruptcy of all faith in God. To admit that God isn't equal to any task is from their point of view the same thing as to say that there isn't any God at all. To say that God is simply doing the best he can would be blasphemous if it were not such perfect nonsense. For by God they mean a Supreme Power in complete and absolute control of this world and a Supreme Intelligence who knows what he is about. For such a God there can be no insuperable obstacles, no failures, no defeats.

These good people are quite sure that God is in no sense dependent upon us, nor does he need our help. We hinder or further God Almighty in his eternal plans? Why! you might as well suppose the tiny motes round about us can in any degree interfere with us in our life purposes. If they bother us too much, we just brush them aside. So God. He has his fixed purposes. He was going about his own business long before you and I were born, and will go about it long after you and I are dead and gone. Those purposes will be carried out in his good time, whether we will or no.

Oh, it may make a difference to us whether we fall in line with those purposes or not. If we do our lives will be taken up and worked into his great world-structure. If we don't we will be brushed aside, tiny mites that we are, rejected, crushed into the dust of the ages. It may make a tremendous difference to us whether we suit God's purposes or not. But it can't make any difference to him. If we of this generation won't do his will, he, all powerful and all wise as he is, may at any moment create out of the very stones a generation of human beings who will.

III.

This, I find, is the position of the average religious man. I want to make it quite clear, the more so since I myself have long ago given up the God he believes in; that I am not unsympathetic with his traditional thought of God; nor do I fail to understand why it has always had so firm a hold upon the souls of men. There are times when any man, who is human at all, wants to believe in an all-powerful, all-wise God—hours of weakness, when it is natural and human to want to fall back

upon some everlasting arms; hours of ignorance, when one wants to believe that God in his omniscience knows the way and can lead us out of the darkness into the light; hours of defeat, when it is good to believe that God anyway is not defeated, that his soul is undaunted, and that in his good time these very forces of evil against which we have broken our lives will go down before his almighty will.

All this it is human and natural and comforting to believe. And if I felt that this newer idea of God must deprive human life of these consolations of religion, I for one would hold my peace. For I would rather the world went on believing in a God who doesn't exist, if that belief brings strength to men in their hours of weakness, joy in their hours of sorrow, courage in their hours of defeat—rather this than that men should believe in any God in whom they can find no strength or joy. Indeed it is only because I have found greater strength and greater joy in the modern idea of God than ever I found in the older idea that I have become one of its advocates.

IV.

Any man who comes to understand this new thought of God is a stronger and happier man. It gives strength and dignity to any human life to believe in a God who needs us humans in his great enterprises on this earth, to feel that we are working under a master-builder who needs us, even, us, in this out-of-the-way corner of his mighty world-edifice. And as for comfort, I know of no more comforting thought of God than this: that God is himself human enough to understand us in all our ways.

V.

Human beings will always and must always worship a human God—a God they can understand and love and who can understand and love them. Any theory you may have of God must sooner or later accommodate itself to this persistent fact of human nature. Men always have humanized God and I imagine they always will.

It was Voltaire, wasn't it, who said that the creation story puts the cart before the horse in reporting that "God created man in his own image." God did nothing of the sort. The thing was done just the other way about. It is man who has created God in his own image. God, this cynic goes on to say, is the noblest work of man.

Christ *par example*. He lets men see how human God is after all! He shows God to the world as a man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; tempted even as we are; of like passions with ourselves. This Christ is certainly the most human of all the Gods men have created in their own image!

All this of course was intended as a gibe at Christianity with its human, man-made God. But, as a matter of fact, this keen-witted old cynic never said a truer thing in all his cynical life. It certainly is true that God (the only God men have ever worshipped or loved) is a God made in their own image. A mean generation, you may depend upon it, will always be caught worshipping a mean God; a tyrannous generation, a tyrant of a God; and so on. And, if ever a just and righteous race of human beings should arise upon this earth, you would find them a people for the first time in history really worshipping a God of justice and righteousness.

VI.

For my own part, I believe that this God we create in our own image is no mere figment of the human mind. On the contrary I think that the human race has in the most literal sense created God—a God whose spirit except for them would never have been born on this earth. I think it was this same Voltaire, or it may have been one of his followers, who suggested that, since we create God in our own image, it would be a good scheme to call a convention of the whole human race and let all the people vote what kind of God they want to preside over this earth. Here again there is a profound truth in his cynical suggestion. We can put God to the vote and elect him. We can. We certainly can. It was moved nearly two thousand years ago by a Galilean peasant that God, a God of justice and righteousness and peace and love, should rule in human life and in human institutions. All those today who favor this motion will please say aye. Those apposed no. The noes have it! And have had it for nearly twenty centuries!

Now, it is on the result of just such votes unconsciously taken and acted upon by each succeeding generation of

men that the everlasting God depends for his power and his rule on this earth. He does depend on us. He can't rule in human life or human institutions unless we humans elect him.

But elect him we can. We, the people, can have the kind of God we want on earth just as certainly as we can have the kind of President we want in Washington. All we have to do is to vote that way and join in one mighty campaign to put the righteousness and love of God into the hearts and institutions of men. God needs us. He certainly does. Without us he can do nothing, be nothing. Until we vote for God, he can no more come to earth and govern the human race than any stranger could go to Washington and without the people's knowledge and consent usurp the powers and duties of the President of the United States.

VII.

Anyway, that's my own deepest experience of God. Everything depends on us. Just as it is impossible for me, a human father, though I may have the best intentions in the world, to put a right spirit in my child unless he votes for me, elects to let me preside over his life; so God is impotent and helpless to accomplish his purposes of justice and love on earth so long as the human race obdurately refuses to be governed by his spirit. The world-spirit is doing the best it can, is making the best world it can through you and me.

VIII.

If only I could tell you what strength and what joy come to a man who votes God into his own life, what a sense of dignity and responsibility is given to an otherwise wretched and irresponsible human existence! It isn't only in our hours of weakness and defeat that we want God. In fact, it has always seemed to me not quite fair to God to vote for him only when we are in some great need. Strong men in the hour of their strength, when they have fought and won a victory over the powers of evil in the world, they want to feel that its a real victory,—a victory which, save for them, God himself must have lost forever. Now it is just this sense of cooperation with God, this sense of victory, which comes to a man who votes God's way. Such a man feels the Eternal Spirit at work in him. He knows somehow that he has opened up a channel in his soul which, had he voted otherwise, would have been forever closed against God's spirit.

IX.

It is a memorable day for any man when he elects God the presiding spirit of his life. And the day will come, I am thinking, when all the peoples of the earth will in this spiritual sense vote for God. Then God's spirit which is now brooding so impotently and helplessly over the earth will come into its own. Then God, even the spirit of justice and love and peace, will reign over all the earth; his spirit enfranchised at last in the soul of humanity.

THE MENACE OF THE PARTISAN.

The great flood of partisan literature that is poured upon the world in the discussion of public questions is the greatest obstacle to human progress. A fair, reasonable presentation of a great subject of vital interest to mankind is like an oasis in a desert. The almost continuous presentation of a one-sided prejudiced point of view prevents men from exercising and developing their capacity for fair and judicial decision.

A partisan press, a partisan political system, a partisan division of people into sects and denominations, are training schools of partisanship. This all tends to close rather than open the mind. The closed mind means, inevitably, no progress. Mankind must then depend on the comparatively few who escape the contaminating influence of partisan environment. These are they who at great effort maintain an open mind.

The mind of the free man is never closed. He is willing to hear evidence from any quarter which he in the sacred inner recesses of his own mind will weigh and judge without reference to his own material interests. He is the independent man in whom is the hope of all progress and the assurance that the civilization that now is will not suffer from dry rot and perish from the earth.

And yet the partisan ever seeks to whip the independent free man into line. Once he burned him with fire;

now, thanks to the increased influence of free men, he roasts him with words. The partisan delights in misinterpretation of words of fairness; he derides the plea for justice. "Get into line and stay put" are the orders that are being continually snapped at the free spirit. This is backed by the powerful machinery of social, economic, and political institutions.

But the partisan forgets that those whom he honors as the heroic leaders of the past, the creators of the culture that we enjoy, the prophets to whom we build monuments today, were the free spirits, the independent men of yesterday. We would still be living in caves, tearing raw meat from the bones of wild animals, if some men of courage and faith had not dared to break the iron rule of tribe. We would be still living in the grip of a soul-destroying caste if some men had not dared to brave the wrath of priest and king.

Today, as ever before, the partisan bids the race halt. He is not the searcher after truth. He seeks to destroy his enemy. In his effort to defeat his opponent he blinds himself to all truth. Truth is the result of contact of mind on mind. The closed mind shuts itself off from all other minds. He finds his only mental satisfaction in that agreement which never stimulates thought but on the contrary develops a mental stupor. Accustomed to it he resents the intrusion of a new idea. Its appearance finally causes actual pain. He wards off the new thought as he would a pestilential germ. All the avenues through which the Eternal may find an opportunity of expression through him are closed and sealed.

It is this logical end of partisanship which makes it a foe to all human progress and the soul-destroying poison in the lives of men. The partisan consciously or unconsciously seeks to close the door to the future.

The rich, abundant, full life is only accessible to the men of the free spirit. This is not the easy way. It often means hardship. It sometimes requires great courage. But it is the way of life. It is also the condition of all really useful service for mankind. When we succumb to the temptation of partisanship, we are disloyal to our own higher selves. Only as we preserve the freedom of the spirit do we keep burning the divine fire that has lighted the way of human progress throughout all the ages. REV. A. L. WEATHERLY.

THE MIDDLE STATES CONFERENCE LETTER

'Tis painful (as the soloist in "Three Men in a Boat" discovered), painful to have one's serious efforts treated as attempted witticisms. Yea, and it is still more painful—be it added—when one fears lest provincial jealousy may have fed the misunderstanding—led the Editor of THE ADVANCE recently to characterize "Middle States' Theology" as "facetious." As though, forsooth, we were not also apostles, had not sages among us, and prophets (albeit as yet no martyrs). Or as though the phrase "Middle States' Theology" might not aptly describe the practical religious philosophy of men who, though differing widely in their celestial speculations, still one and all held firmly to man's share in "the work of grace"—which is the condition here I admit, yes, have avowed. Do some smile on Mr. Wells? But lo, Dr. Parry of Philadelphia declares: "I consider that author a poor theologian, a prejudiced historian and an unsound philosopher. I am sure his book will not stand the test in any respect. His finite God is ridiculous and not nearly so attractive as his 'Veiled Being.'" Yet, if thus east of the Alleghenies (as elsewhere) we are speculatively divided, our practical theology is, I think, *one;* is single if not singular—a working "*Middle States' Philosophy*" that finds its unifying embodiment in the person of Rev. Frank Gilmore, our new Secretary.

A genial man, Mr. Gilmore, with a fund of anecdotes and a sympathetic smile and handshake and heart. And an energetic spirit, too. Already has he traveled the Northern circuit, visiting our faithful Canadian allies, and reopened the headquarters in New York, and inspired the Elizabeth Society at its annual meeting, and preached here and there, and withal given thoughtful counsel on the problem of refilling our vacant pulpits. With what results? We shall see later. Meanwhile has Rev. Peter Goldsmith resigned at Yonkers to take up other professional work, and Mr. Auer at Wheeling, and Rev. Frederick Hinckley been prevented by severe illness from returning to his pulpit at Wilmington—but several newcomers have been added to our ranks—three recruits from Meadville: Rev. H. T. Wintenteen, who goes to Allegheny (Pittsburgh, N. S.);

Rev. Howard L. Denny, called to Rochester; and Rev. C. H. Valentine just installed at Vineland.

"Just" means October 5. A rainy evening, I understand, but the little stone church was aglow with flowers, and the welcome was warm and the words of the speakers inspiring. Feelingly Dr. Reeman of Trenton spoke of his previous visits to the church and of its former pastor, Dr. Gilbert. "An illustrious mantle" he has left to his successor, he said. Then continued, "The only ministry that can prevail in the future, I believe, is a prophetic one. The old forms are passing. The world needs a new order of things. The minister of today must be more than a vendor of theology—he must be a leader. There must be a new vision; a new religion of democracy that will link up God Himself with humanity." Thus the challenge, to which at the close Mr. Valentine responded briefly but earnestly. Paying, too, his tribute to the life and work of his predecessor (who gave his last twenty-six years to the Vineland church), he asked that in this time of turmoil they might all cooperate with him for the common good "in the spirit of the lily white soul of the Nazarene."

Coming up from Vineland, as he passes through Philadelphia one observes with joy the presence of three Unitarian ministers—Mr. Griffin having arrived at the First, and Mr. Forbes at Germantown being already installed. And together with Mr. Parry—but let me leave prophecies till another time, note simply that at Girard Ave. (the old "Spring Garden" society) the outlook is promising; their Unity Club has undertaken the organization of a Red Cross unit, while evening services will shortly be resumed—then take a hurried train for Lancaster. For there in the pretty stone church October 2 they held their annual meeting and supper. And while it is too late to get some of the latter (especially since ninety sat down to it while they celebrate Food Conservation Sunday, October 21), still it is not too late to catch echoes of the speeches, learn of the eight new members, and hear from Mr. Ridel of the many hopeful signs for the coming year. They deserve those eight recruits, by the way, for seven of their congregation have enrolled under the colors.

Yes, and at least one, I should have said, has gone from Dr. Parry's church—is an artillery officer overseas; while one or two have enlisted from Hackensack, and twenty-five from the Church of the Messiah. So much more belligerent they are at the latter—but no, hardly that. Remember their numbers, if you please—234 was the average audience through the summer (one Sunday 400 were out); while Heaven knows how many attended their formal reopening on September 30. Nor were they disappointed, I am sure. Both pastors spoke that day, outlining their hopes and plans for the season. "The Church in War-time" was their theme. And if their addresses had but half the eloquence of the pastoral letter which announced them! Oh, brief quotations can scarcely do it justice, yet to show its spirit let me give a few sentences:

"It is not religion but the application of religion which has failed."

"Our task is still that of the disciples of an elder day. Uncompromisingly must we teach the omnipotence of love, the obligation of brotherhood, the law of democracy—"

"If ever there was opportunity for the vindication of our faith and the doing of our work, it is this moment of vast destiny when the fabric of an immoral civilization is tumbled to ruins—"

"Nor need we fear lest there be conflict between the task of religion and the aims and purposes of our republic. For the United States in her best estate is none other than the embodied aspiration of a mighty people for spiritual freedom."

"Therefore let no man falter."

Ringing words these, which will bring an "Amen" from some who could not wholly follow Dr. Holmes in his address at Summit early in October. 'Twas at the annual Universalist State Conference held at Dr. Doan's church (a "two in one" society), so both sides of the family were in the audience which listened to the earnest Messiah pastor as he outlined the spiritual religion we need. And much was true, but, "Such a faith," he said, "like that of Socrates, would pay no heed to consequences." At that some of us balked. "Consequences"—'tis an ambiguous term. Does one mean the result to oneself or to society? Surely, if one tells me, "This righteous deed must be done though the consequences are fatal to the whole human race,"—well, I may be justified perhaps in either questioning his *estimate* or, though a disciple of Malthus, challenging his *ethics*.

But, alas, I have trenched on the editorial province. To return to the metropolis—Red Cross work is the order at the Messiah two days in the week, with some forty women engaged and enthusiastically. Sundays at ten comes a class in "The Social Origins of Religion," led by Mr. Brown, and at 8:15 the Public Forum. At All Souls Dr. Sullivan is back and has begun a series of addresses on the deeper problems of the time, much in line with those Dr. Moore is giving at Schenectady. "Regaining Control of Civilization" was the general title of the latter's opening series, and again, "Can Americans Do Good in a Way the World Will Not Speak Evil of?" From Brooklyn comes the happy news that Dr. Brundage is improving so rapidly that he may be able to resume

his pulpit in January. From Passaic, with the announcement of special Sunday evening lectures (illustrated—they have a fine stereopticon there), a card was sent out to his people by Dr. Shelander. "We need," he writes, "to pray for the power of clear vision, for a consecrated purpose and for a real desire to cooperate for the establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness." His topic October 28 is "The Unfinished Reformation."

That is all, except a few lines from Ottawa. "Our former pastor," one writes, "is in England, holding an important position with the headquarters staff of the Canadian troops, and is a Lieut.-Colonel. He has sent in his resignation, as the time of his return is very indefinite. We hope to settle a new minister the first of the year. Meanwhile, we are getting along with such supplies as are good enough to come up this way—Rev. J. T. Sunderland and Rev. Albert Lazenby, Rev. J. T. Gilmore and Dr. Dole. From a church whose men are largely middle-aged, about ten have enlisted and two have been killed."

And to the angel of the Church in Ottawa write—"I know thy works, that thou hast been found faithful."—Amen.

K. E. Evans.

WESTERN CONFERENCE NEWS

Ohio.

The church at Dayton has mapped out a definite and constructive program for the year's work. A social survey of the church is under way under the leadership of Mrs. Charles H. Kumler, who has had unusual experience in social work. Under her leadership, six teams of two each are planning to cover the membership of the church within a period of two weeks. The results of the survey will guide the plans for the social work of the church.

A series of Sunday evening services was begun on October 15. The first topics for this series are "Questions of vital concern," "Where look for God today," "What are the sources of personal power?" "Dare we be Christians?" "Is death the end?"

The School of Religious Education is thoroughly organized, with graded textbooks and expressional work, leading to definite ends. Its work has three distinct divisions —worship, instruction and training in service, the latter being provided by definite tasks assigned to each grade and completed within a month, when a new task is assigned.

The church music committee has successfully organized a community chorus, which meets in the church on Sunday afternoons to sing and learn to sing those songs which everyone ought to know. In due season programs will be given at the aviation field and at the soldiers' home.

A strong interest has developed in a series of gatherings at the church on alternate Wednesday nights. These occasions are called "Community Nights." In each case the supper is followed by an address by some local man of note who presents some matter of special interest. This address is followed by a social time. Interspersed with addresses there will be such varied attractions as Men's Night, Ladies' Night, Children's Night, Drama, etc.

A systematic campaign for members is under way. It is most gratifying to know that a church which in the past had been in large measure shut out from participation in the general life of the community is now being asked to cooperate in general undertakings, particularly in connection with the Y. W. C. A. and Y. M. C. A. in the work for enlisted men at the aviation field.

The Church at Youngstown reports that the war has absorbed the attention of the people to a very large degree. The church has recently had visits and sermons or addresses from Rev. Horace Westwood of Winnipeg, a former pastor of the church, and Rev. Elmer S. Forbes of Boston, Secretary of the Department of Social Service.

Illinois.

The forty-third meeting of the Illinois Conference was held at Sheffield on October 16 and 17. Again an unusual program had been prepared by Mr. J. E. Williams, the president of the Conference, with the general topic of "Religion and the World War." This program was printed in the last issue of the Advance and therefore will not be repeated here. The absence of Mr. Williams, who is now serving as Fuel Administrator for the State of Illinois, was greatly regretted. Despite heavy rains and annoying restrictions of railway service, there was a fine attendance and the interest in the program was cumulative. Hard thinking, penetrating insights and uplifts of heart and will resulted in the development of a larger and more intelligent faith. The sessions in charge of the Women's Alliance brought forth, not reports, or consideration of minor matters, but woman's definite contribution to a better understanding of the problem of life as focused for us by the world conflict.

Resolutions were offered in acknowledgment of the generous hospitality of the Sheffield church, of regret at the absence of the president and of rejoicing in the service he is rendering to the state and nation. In view of the probable withdrawal of the Uni

tarian Advance from the field, the need of a local paper as a channel of communication between the churches was recognized and urged upon the proper committee. The following officers were elected: President, Mr. J. E. Williams, Streator; Vice-President, Mr. George B. Dedrick, Geneseo; Secretary, Rev. Arthur T. Brown, Evanston; Treasurer, Mr. P. W. Gregory, Bloomington. Missionary Committee: Rev. H. H. Burch, Bloomington; Rev. Lyman M. Greenman, Quincy; Mrs. Paul M. Chamberlain, Chicago.

Wisconsin.

The pace of the Milwaukee church began to quicken after the meeting of the General Conference at Montreal which had made very heavy demands upon the pastor's time. The last Sunday in September the morning service was under the auspices of the Men's Club, an experience which proved highly interesting. The following Friday at the meeting of the Men's Club Prof. W. H. Henderson spoke on "Preparation behind the line in Wisconsin." On October 14 the recruiting campaign committee had its first meeting of the year. The women of the church are busy on the same tasks as the women of our churches elsewhere.

The church at Madison is carefully considering the matter of securing a new leader, and officers and members alike are accepting a degree of responsibility far greater than has been the case with a resident minister in charge.

At Menomonie the new pastor, Rev. Walter A. Smith, and his wife are using their best endeavors to reorganize and enlist the activities of a congregation which has been for a year without a leader and without regular services.

Minnesota.

The outstanding events in Minnesota are the installations at St. Paul and at St. Cloud. Rev. Samuel M. Crothers of Cambridge, Mass., and Rev. C. R. Eliot of Boston made the long journey to take part in the installation of Rev. Frederick M. Eliot as minister of Unity Church, St. Paul, on Thursday evening, October 11. An appeal being made to these gentlemen, they left New England a little earlier than the original plans had called for and took part in the installation of Rev. Vincent B. Silliman at St. Cloud on Wednesday evening, October 10. Though it is more than a score of years since Mr. Crothers left St. Paul, his interest in the Northwest has never slackened as the years went by. As he had a hand in the founding of the St. Cloud church and was pastor of the St. Paul church for some years, his participation in these two services had a deep significance. Rev. C. R. Eliot is the father of the new pastor of the St. Paul church, so that family as well as church ties found adequate representation. Mr. Eliot's sermon topics for October were as follows: "The Persistence of Religion," "A Religion for Times of Need," "The Armor of Honest Thought," "The Unfinished Work of the Reformation."

Iowa.

The church at Davenport is still engaged in seeking its leader.

The fall work in Des Moines is well under way. In connection with war demands, Unity Circle continued its weekly meetings through the summer. The regular study meetings of Unity Circle began September 26. The program will deal with "The Trend of Modern Thought as Presented in Current Literature." The minister, Rev. Curtis W. Reese, has been giving a series of timely sermons on two topics, "The Duty of the Church in War Time," and "The Mobilization of our Spiritual Resources." The cantonment recently established at Camp Dodge has greatly increased the responsibilities of this church. Of course certain needs are best met by united community action, but each church will do its specific "bit." Mr. James R. Hannah, one of our trustees, has had charge of the state work for the prohibition amendment of the Iowa constitution. At this time it is not quite clear whether the amendment was won or lost.

Unity Church at Sioux City entered into its third month under the leadership of its new pastor, Rev. Charles E. Snyder, with a vim and enthusiasm that was surprising even to the most optimistic of its members. The idea that the church plant is capable of more activity and a greater output is gaining ground.

The sermon subjects for October are as follows: October 7, "What's Around the Corner?" October 14, "May and October." October 21, "Is Faith Outgrown?" In commemoration of the Reformation of Martin Luther: October 28, "Hell, Geology, or Psychology?" The November series will deal with the "Necessity of Immortality," and those of December with "Religion and Young Folks."

The Board of Trustees has appointed a committee to revise the church roll and bring it up to date. In the long list of those who have left the city with no word of where they were going, the committee, in tracing them, has found many who have passed to the Great Beyond, some lost track of entirely, some who have left the fold and have gone into others, but a goodly number who are doing a good work in other churches of our denomination in other cities. Among others we find the names of Rev. Eleanor Gordon, Rev. Marie H. Jenney Howe, Rev. Rowena

Morse Mann, Rev. A. L. Hudson, and Rev. Arthur Heeb, all of whom went into the ministry from our church and of all of whom this church is very proud. We are very happy to have with us for what we hope will be a very long visit, Mrs. Jennie Dana Bucknam of Washington, D. C., who is one of our charter members and whose husband, the late E. H. Bucknam, was clerk of the parish for over twenty-five years.

The church has contributed largely to the soldiers' library fund and the subscription list for further contributions is still open.

Plenty of volunteers to care for the babies and small children while the parents are attending the church service were forthcoming, so parents no longer have that excuse for staying at home.

The choir is accomplishing good work both in the excellence of its music and in the creation of more interest in church affairs among the young folks. Recently, after choir practice, they organized themselves into a "Good Fellowship Club" and have undertaken a series of Wednesday night congregational parties to which all young folks from eight to eighty years of age are most cordially invited and will be danced, fed, and otherwise entertained.

A "Men's Club of Unity Church" was recently organized and will hold monthly meetings at which they will dine, smoke, get acquainted with each other and discuss both formally and informally subjects of interest and importance to the church and mankind in general.

Unity Circle and Unity Guild have gone into the work of the new year with their usual enthusiasm. The Guild has recently enriched its treasury to the amount of several hundreds of dollars as a result of a week's experience as proprietors of a lunch booth at the Interstate Fair.

The Sunday School is prospering as it should. Two new classes have been added. One, an adult class, which with the Men's Club might be called the successor of the old "Forum," which has been discontinued, has taken up the critical study of the Bible. It meets on Sunday evening at five o'clock for an hour of study followed by an hour of social intercourse with light refreshments. This class has been remarkably well attended and the work remarkably interesting.

Arrangements have been made for the transportation of the little folks of the kindergarten class from their homes to the school and back home. Several automobiles have been engaged for this work.

Mr. F. T. Lowrey has taken charge of the younger boys and is drilling them in boy scout and gymnasium work, and Mrs. Wickersham will conduct a similar line of work among the younger girls. Mr. Snyder has taken the young folks of high school age into a class for the study of the religious sects.

The State Conference will be held at Griswold, Iowa, on October 23, 24 and 25, and a goodly number from Unity Church, including delegates from the church, Sunday school and the other societies will attend, most of them making the trip overland by automobile.

MISSOURI.

The Church of the Unity, St. Louis, dedicated its new building on Waterman Avenue and King's Highway on Sunday, October 7. This was the fulfillment of a long cherished hope and gives the church a beautiful and adequate building favorably situated with relation to its constituency. The building is of stone, without tower or spire. In addition to the auditorium, which seats a little more than three hundred, there is a large room for the use of the Women's Alliance with built-in cupboards at both ends of the room which provide abundant storage space for sewing machines and work. In the well lighted basement under the main auditorium is the Sunday school room, with stage adapted to theatrical performances or illustrated lectures. Under the Alliance room is a similar room fitted up with cupboards for the use of the Boy Scouts and also for the men when they care to use it. In an extension of the building at right angles at the rear of the lot is the minister's study and library with its separate entrance. The proportions of the building are pleasing and the appointments correct in every detail, even the lawns about the church were completed at the time of the dedication.

The Church of the Messiah omitted its services for the day in order to participate in the service of dedication. The church at Alton did the same. The ministers of both churches took part in the services. President Eliot, D. D., of the American Unitarian Association, delivered the sermon. Rev. F. L. Hosmer, a former pastor of the church contributed a hymn for the occasion and was also able to be present and give a personal word. A letter was read from the late Mrs. Learned, wife of Rev. John C. Learned, for twenty-five years pastor of the church, who had hoped to live long enough to be for at least a few times in the new building. Mr. H. Barrett Learned, now of Washington, D. C., son of the former pastor, also gave an address. The fellowship of the Western Conference was indicated by the presence of its secretary, Rev. E. C. Smith.

Every seat was occupied and a considerable number of friends were gathered in the Alliance room. The church had been occupied for several Sundays and the indications are for a very much better attendance than was possible at the old location, all of the church members having gradually moved to other parts of the city. All indications point

to a growing usefulness and increasing service for Unity church.

KANSAS.

The Wichita church reports that at last the full amount has been paid in on the gift of Mrs. Lucetta S. Carter and that both church and parsonage are now free from debt. During the summer the furnace was made over and other repairs on the building were made. The church closes its first full year of self-support with all bills paid and a small balance in the treasury. Mrs. Carter, while feeble in bodily health and confined in a hospital, has the great satisfaction of seeing the church realize fully the benefits of her generosity while she is yet here among us.

The Board of Directors of the Western Unitarian Conference held a stated meeting at the Chicago Headquarters on October 1 at 2:15 p. m. Present: Mesdames Lynn and Mann, Messrs. Day, Foote, Harrison, Hosmer, Smith. The records of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The Board confirmed the action of the Executive Committee in appointing Rev. E. C. Smith as a delegate to the meeting of the General Conference at Montreal. It was the judgment of the Board that since he went to the General Conference to present a report of the Fellowship Committee his expenses should properly be borne by that body, and he was instructed to correspond with the secretary of the General Conference concerning the matter.

It was voted to grant the application of the Des Moines church for $150 to supplement the fund raised locally to enable the church to meet the special need created by the presence of a large concentration camp, and the secretary was instructed to correspond with the churches and endeavor to secure this amount by special gifts.

It was voted to approve of missionary work among the Italians in Chicago, provided the proper leader could be found, and the ministers and churches of our fellowship in Chicago were urged to give such fellowship and cooperation as might prove possible.

It was voted not to take over The Unitarian Advance as the official organ of the Conference. A committee consisting of Messrs. Hosmer, Smith and Foote was appointed to deal with the whole question of the relations of the Conference to The Unitarian Advance.

A portion of the will of Thomas J. Diven, deceased, which contained a conditional legacy to the Conference, was read, but no action was taken since the will had been set aside and no action seemed necessary.

The action of the Conference at its annual meeting, so far as changing the title of the executive officer and the election of the secretary, seemed to the Board, upon a study of the By-Laws, to be illegal, and it was decided to take counsel with some competent lawyer with regard to the matter. The meeting then adjourned to Monday afternoon, October 8, at 2 o'clock, with the intention of taking this matter under advisement after legal aid had been sought. Adjourned at 4:15 until 2 p. m., Monday, October 8.

ERNEST CHARLES SMITH, *Secretary.*

The Board of Directors of the Western Unitarian Conference held an adjourned meeting at the Chicago Headquarters on October 8, 1917, at 2 o'clock. Present: Mesdames Lynn and Mann, Messrs. Cavanagh, Foote, Hawley, Smith and Williams. Mr. Williams was elected chairman of the meeting. The resignations of Miss Scheible as secretary and of Rev. Ernest C. Smith as president were presented and accepted. Prof. Morgan Brooks of Urbana was then elected president and Rev. E. C. Smith secretary, with the implied understanding that the salary which had been voted to the president at the annual meeting should now revert to the secretary.

Mr. Smith presented the financial statement of The Unitarian Advance, showing a considerable estimated deficit for the year ending December 31, 1917. It was voted that the Conference pay $60 to Miss Scheible for extra clerical services in connection with The Unitarian Advance, covering a period of eighteen months and extending to December 31, 1917.

Dr. Mann reported that the Board of Trustees of the Third Church were glad to offer the use of the church edifice for Italian services to be conducted by Mr. Flamma, providing these were held on Sunday afternoons. The meeting adjourned at 3:25.

ERNEST CHARLES SMITH, *Secretary.*

FELLOWSHIP NOTICES.

Application for admission into the Unitarian Fellowship has been received from Hugh Walters Gayer, a student at Union Theological Seminary. George W. Smith, Walter R. Hunt, Frank A. Gilmore, Committee of Fellowship for the Middle States and Eastern Canada.

Application for admission into the Unitarian Fellowship has been received from Berthold Erick Schalow of Erie, Pa. George W. Smith, Walter R. Hunt, Frank A. Gilmore, Committee of Fellowship for the Middle States and Eastern Canada.

Application for admission into the Unitarian Fellowship has been received from Charles Judson Dutton of Troy, N. Y. George W. Smith, Walter R. Hunt, Frank A. Gilmore, Committee of Fellowship for the Middle States and Eastern Canada.

Western Unitarian Headquarters

The Western Unitarian Conference maintains offices at 105 South Dearborn St., Chicago, which are open daily from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. (Saturdays 9 a. m. to 3 p. m.). All publications of the American Unitarian Association, including those of the Religious Education Department, and of Unity Publishing Committee, as well as all denominational periodicals, are kept on sale and for distribution.

REV. ERNEST C. SMITH, Secretary

MISS LINA SCHEIBLE, Headquarters Clerk

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Further particulars from George Grover Mills, Secretary,

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For freedom of thought and word, believing that freedom and truth go ever hand in hand. Therefore they do not attempt to prescribe the belief of either their ministers or their laymen, nor do they fear diversity of opinion as incompatible with unity of spirit.

For the fuller realization of the divine in the universe and in the heart of man. They believe that God is Infinite Spirit, the source of all life and truth, and that something of the nature of God may be apprehended by study of humanity, and of the world about us.

For belief in the divine humanity of Jesus, because they hold that all souls are children of the Infinite Spirit, and that the divine sonship is a universal manifestation, not a unique phenomenon.

For civic reform, economic justice, and social regeneration, believing that the mission of the church is now and here to establish the divine commonwealth of love and peace on earth.

For eternal life—not merely another life of blissful ease, which we shall discover beyond the grave; but life which already lays hold upon immortality because it is even now in harmony with God's divine order.